

Family And Domestic Violence in Nigeria: A Study of The Niger Delta Region, 2000-2023

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Abstract

This study examines the risk factors, impact and ways to mitigate family and domestic violence in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria from year 2000 to 2023. Background: Family and domestic violence consists of a pattern of coercive behaviours used by an adult or adolescent to establish and maintain power and control over another person. This violence is perpetrated in the form of physical, sexual, economic, emotional, political, or psychological abuse, neglect or stalking. Family and domestic violence includes child abuse, intimate partner violence and elder abuse. Method: Employing a multidisciplinary approach the research integrates qualitative insights through in-depth interviews with families, community leaders and relevant stakeholders. Results: Risk factors include, individual, child, parent or caregiver relationship factors, functional dependence, cognitive impairment as well as community and societal factors. These factors increase the risk of family and domestic violence in a complex socioeconomic-cultural landscape of a region with enormous wealth, environmental degradation from recurrent oil spillage without adequate remediation and where the people live in abject poverty. The consequences include

depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, poor academic performance, dysfunctional families and poor health outcomes.

Keywords: Dysfunctional home, Abusive behaviour, Gender inequality, Poverty, Human right violation

Introduction

Family and domestic violence are abusive behaviours in which one individual gains power over another individual (United States Department of Justice 2023). Family and domestic violence is not limited to one group, culture, gender or sexuality but can affect family members and intimate partners across different communities and cultures. It includes a range of abuse including economic, physical, sexual, emotional and psychological, toward children, adult, and elders (Huecker et al. 2022). It is a problem that makes people at one time or the other in their lifetime to report to health care facilities for evaluation or for treatment as victims of family and domestic violence (Sapkota et al. 2019: 79). In Nigeria the burden of domestic violence among families has been found to be high in the Niger Delta region. That is the major reason why this research is on the Niger Delta region. In the Niger Delta region and Nigeria as a hold, the issue of family and domestic violence has over

the years remained a pervasive and rooted challenge not only in the region, but globally. This challenge has been of great concern because of its far-reaching consequences on some families and the society at large. The issue encompasses sexual, physical, emotional, mental, psychological, social and economic abuse, which has occurred in different families at different times and occasions. Family and domestic violence is deeply rooted in cultural norms, and poverty in several ways contribute to its perpetration. Family and domestic violence occurs in Africa and the Niger Delta region, especially because of the complexity of the region and interplay of such factors as socio-cultural, gender inequality, political instability and ecological degradation that have affected different families and negatively affected their standard of living (A. Ogar. Personal communication, April 19, 2024). The difficult to accept gender inequalities in families (Gähler, Oláh 2025), can be

responsible for many family and domestic violence in the Niger Delta region.

It is pertinent to note that beyond these factors, there are others such as militancy, unemployment, economic meltdown and general underdevelopment that have negative effects on family life that have also contributed to family and domestic violence. The increasing cases of family and domestic violence has reflected in families in different ways particularly among the women with such effects as anxiety, physical injuries, substance misuse, depression, sleep disorders, and even reproductive disorders (Oluremi 2015: 24-33). The men are not spared because they are also experiencing the bitter part of it, because of the death of spouses, humiliation, stigma and fear (Ibrahim et al. 2022: 227).

The cases of family and domestic violence often remain unreported to the appropriate authorities because of the embarrassment, humiliation, disgrace and stigma and discrimination that family members experience. In any case women are mostly affected than the men because of gender disparity in the culture and social life of the people. The period under review in this study had witnessed cases of family and domestic

violence most of which were often under-reported or not reported at all.

The various government agencies under the Federal Ministries of Education, Health and Social Services, Non-governmental Organisations and other support services groups had made efforts to contend with this dilemma in the Niger Delta region and Nigeria, but the problem continues to increase in its prevalence and sophistication (N. Bassey. Personal communication, January 24, 2025). There have been legal approaches to mitigate the effect of family and domestic violence as well as serving as a deterrent to perpetrators of this crime in the of Nigeria. The Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act of 2015 (VAPP) was armed to eliminate violence in public and private life to protect victims facing especially gender base violence. This law criminalises other various forms of violence such as physical abuse, domestic abuse, psychological abuse and other traditional harmful practices in Nigeria and its environs. This law is applied in the Federal Capital and in some of the various states in Nigeria ("Factsheet" 2025). Many civil society organisations have also been advocating for the rights of victims of family and domestic violence in the Niger Delta region and Nigeria.

In the Niger Delta region, the victims are generally still helpless because the laws are not being implemented because of weak institutions, corruption and some deep-rooted cultural norms. Some of the victims are unable to have affordable judicial services to plead their case in court (Amuda, Alghanmi 2024).

Some scholars have written on domestic violence in Nigeria and there is evidence that the prevalence of domestic violence in Nigeria is rising. According to the Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey of 2018, a significant number of women have experienced one form of domestic violence or the other. Some multilevel factors such as alcohol, anger, smoking, financial constraint, and childlessness are known to facilitate family and domestic violence in the Niger Delta region (Olubunmi 2024). This research intends to explore the causes, challenges and proffer recommendations on family and domestic violence in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. It will also examine the extent to which the economic, socio-cultural, social and political dynamics have in different dimensions influenced the problem.

The study will bring into prominence the role of government agencies, non-governmental organisations, and the judicial system in

combating or mitigating the effects of family and domestic valence in the region. This research intends to contribute to a greater understanding of the systemic factors fueling family and domestic violence in these perspectives. The major goal of this research is to encourage breaking the silence on family and domestic violence in the region and making everyone an advocate, through more effective government policies and intervention strategies to assist the victims of family and domestic violence. The dynamics and the complexity of the study will encourage and bring to the fore a multi-dimensional approach that can help in the reduction or even eradication of family and domestic violence in the region (F. Odok. Personal communication, March 16, 2025). The proper implementation of policies, education, awareness campaigns, community sensitisation, good institutions and gender inclusion should be emphasised to combat this challenge. Family and domestic violence has become a global phenomenon within families and communities with serious consequences on the society such as physical injuries, anxiety, depression, low productivity and even death among others. This research will also proffer solutions to ending family and

domestic violence in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Method

The historical method of qualitative approach was adopted, with materials from both primary and secondary sources consulted for the purpose of research. This study employs a multi-disciplinary research approach to investigate the historical intersection between family and domestic violence in the Nigeria Niger Delta region with fact on domestic violence. The methodology integrates qualitative research techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject. Primary sources such as oral interviews were used, this source offers a comprehensive understand on life experience of family and domestic violence in Niger Delta region. Oral interviews helped illuminate local narratives and provide a nuanced and individuals were visited to obtain information. Secondary sources consulted was also for the purpose of research, secondary sources used were books and other written documents that helped to consolidate the research.

Discussions Background and forms of Family and Domestic Violence in the Niger Delta Region

Family and domestic violence generally means an abusive and violent act committed by a family member against another. It is a global phenomenon that takes place between family members, whether in a nuclear or extended family. In the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, family and domestic violence is an entrenched challenge that is deeply rooted in families and has a complex background (Amuda, Alghanmi 2024). This challenge has come a long way from the pre-colonial practices, and colonial era because of the profound economic, cultural, political and social transformations during these periods. During the pre-colonial period, most families in the Niger Delta region operated under the rim of a larger family and the structure accommodated nuclear and extended families. It is pertinent to note that at this period family and domestic violence was minimal and families abhorred violence. Men in the pre-colonial period had significant authority and control over their families and communities (A. Ogar. Personal communication, April 19, 2024).

There were structures that were put in place to control and moderate people and families, such as the patriarchal system. The men were the head of their families, with the power to make decisions. The major role of the women was

childbearing and management of the home. In those days the hierarchical system created an atmosphere whereby the dominance by the men was acceptable and it gave the men the opportunity to manage their families and minimise family and domestic violence. There was punishment meted out to members of the family if there was any misdemeanour (Odeigah 2016). This patriarchal system made the women submissive and always demanded their loyalty. This unequal wielding of authority by the men contributed significantly to the perception that the men have the right to chastise their wives even with physical violence. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the cases of family and domestic violence increased because of lockdowns, restriction of movements, emotional and economic stress (Amuda, Alghanmi 2024).

Disciplinary measures were inculcated into cultural beliefs and norms that, it was culturally acceptable for a man to hit or smack the wife as a form of disciplinary measure, and the women always endured the abuse, concealing their disapproval of the acts of physical or emotional violence in order to protect their families from shame and stigma. Women saw the reporting of acts of family and domestic violence as disgraceful and an act of

disobedience. They were therefore discouraged to report such acts of violence because of societal stigma and fear. Some of the cases of family and domestic violence were unnoticed and undocumented leaving the victims helpless (United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF] 2005).

During the advent of the colonial period in Nigeria, families in the Niger Delta region recorded cases of domestic violence because women had limited access to justice. When the British established colonial control, they introduced legal and administrative structures, but it did not improve the situation for the women, nor did it reduce domestic violence. The colonial authority gave opportunity for customary law to operate alongside with the British common law. The patriarchal norms did not see domestic violence as a criminal matter and there was no protection for the women, unless when it resulted to death. The colonial authority only empowered chiefs, while the women were recognised as market queens. This reinforced the male dominance, making it difficult for the women to challenge domestic abuse (N. Bassey. Personal communication, January 24, 2025). It is important to note that despite the fear and shame associated with family and domestic

violence, the women of the Niger Delta region found ways to resist domestic violence. Historically, women were not known for violent agitation, but change began when women groups and associations especially the Aba women's riot of 1929 asserted their rights even though their major concerns then were the political and economic challenges of the time. That action of 1929 was an indication that the women could resist violence, domination, oppression and subjugation by the men. It is important to note that the church played a vital role in settling disputes among family members. The Christian missions and churches gave women refuge when family and domestic violence was reported, however this option was limited to a few families in the region (Casimir 2023: 109-113).

Forms and Manifestation of Family and Domestic violence in the Niger Delta from 2000 - 2023

Family and domestic violence has remained a significant and pervasive problem in the Niger Delta region, and is deeply rooted in the socio-cultural norms, economic realities and political instability. The period under review has witnessed an increasing number of victims of family and domestic violence and before the period under review efforts to reduce this

social menace has not yielded the desired results. It is difficult to give a statistical data or survey on domestic violence, because some of the issues have been largely unreported, making statistical data inaccurate (Dahlbery, Krug 2002). The problem of family and domestic violence is common in Nigeria, and in 2019, the National Bureau of Statistics survey revealed that 30 percent of Nigeria women aged 15-45 years have in one way, or the other experienced physical violence and 68 percent have encountered sexual abuse, emotional and economic pressure. Some other indicators have also showed that over 35 percent of the women in Nigeria have also suffered from family and domestic violence. Family and domestic violence manifests in different ways within the family structure. It is a human violation behaviour that has affected some people across almost all demographics, despite gender, age, religion, geographic location or culture. It has been reported that even the girls are disproportionately affected even before marriage (F. Odok. Personal communication, March 16, 2025). Over the years, families have suffered from different forms of domestic violence which are identified below;

1. **Physical abuse:** It has been observed that physical abuse is one of the most recognized and identified forms of family and domestic violence in the Niger Delta region. Physical abuse is a behaviour that is used to coerce and create fear in the victim. This can occur between spouses, siblings, children and relatives, this violence can result to injuries or death. In recent times some couples have fought to an extent that led to serious physical injuries or death of a spouse. Some of the abuses come in the form of punching, beating, kicking, slapping and strangulation which can lead to death. Family and domestic violence could also result to the use of weapons such as burning with fire or hot objects, cutting and choking among others. Female genital mutilation, that is carried out by the local and traditional people among our young girls is also seen as one of the physical abuses that has claimed many lives in the Niger Delta region.

2. **Sexual Abuse:** Sexual abuse is prevalent in most societies; it thrives in silence and secrecy, and most times the victims do not speak out. This abuse is a non-consensual sexual act whereby an individual is forced, coerced, tricked into the act or manipulated without the person's consent, because of age, disability or low social status. It is a serious

violation of human rights; the sexual abuse can occur in relationships between family members or public spaces. There are various forms of sexual abuse such as, rape and sexual assault (Akintoye, Okaka 2021). This comes in the form of forcefully having carnal knowledge of the victim without the consent of the individual, it could also be in form of sexual harassment or physical harassment. This could occur when an individual consistently requests for a sexual favour without the consent of the other person. Sexual exploitation is when a person takes advantage of a victim who is vulnerable, just to achieve an aim. This is a process whereby an individual trades sex with food, money, or shelter and this can also include child trafficking, forced labour, and pornography. Sexual abuse can also be marital rape, and this is a case whereby a spouse forcefully has sexual intercourse with the spouse without consent. Some of these abuses occur because of lack of education, gender inequality, cultural silence, religious silence and substance abuse. Most of these cases have become everyday occurrence in some homes in the Niger Delta region and in Nigeria.

3. **Economic and financial abuse:** Economic abuse can also be referred to

financial abuse, it comes in the form of manipulation where one person controls the spending of money of another in the family rendering the person incapable to use the money or control his or her resources. This act occurs mostly in families or intimate relationships, and it can lead to loss of financial security and dignity. There are different forms of financial abuse such as denying access to credit card or account, giving feeding allowance and demanding receipts of expenditure and spending money meant for the family without permission. Financial and economic abuse remain a very crucial matter in families, yet it is under-played and not reported in the society. Awareness should be created by empowering victims to get their financial independence.

4. Child abuse: This refers to a form of physical, sexual harm, emotional, neglect or exploitation of a child, denial of food, education, health care, beating, child labour, child marriage, and sex abuse. Some parents have secret sexual activities with their children or relations forcefully. Most of them threaten their children or victims to keep the act very secret. Some children are exposed to inappropriate home training which can lead to abuse (Odeigah 2016). The victims are most

times left with consequences that are grievous and severe such as emotional trauma, trust issue, poor academic performance, aggression and violence among others. These abuses are profound and far-reaching to the victims. The victims usually have withdrawal symptoms, because of fear which have led some of the victims into isolation (Farre 2013: 24-46). This is not only a child tragedy, but a tragedy for the whole family and the society at large

5. Elder Abuse: Elder abuse also known as the abuse of the old people, has significantly become a challenge in the society, causing danger and risk to our senior citizens. This is one of the family abuses that is most silent in the Niger Delta region. The elderly in the Niger Delta region experience neglect, physical abuse, emotional abuse, financial exploitation and mental abuse. Some elderly people suffer from abuses without getting help from relations. The prevalence of Elder Abuse in Nigeria is 14.6 percent and this is high, and it poses a serious danger and challenge to our very senior citizens. These forms of abuses on the elderly have resulted to the death of some elderly people without the knowledge of relations or the public (Oladeji 2013: 24-32). All these are human rights violation because it could have a devastating effect on the elderly.

Elder abuse can manifest in various forms, it can also be a physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, emotional, financial, psychological and abandonment and all these can be perpetrated by their children, relatives and unknown individuals. The elder abuse is a global issue; this issue is well understood in the developed countries, because the elderly people have institutionalized care. But in the Niger Delta region, care for the elderly is by the family members. Care for the elderly is supposed to be a responsibility that involves support, compassion, love, attention and patience. The care for the elderly is still in the hands of relatives. Though, globally on the 15th of June of every year is recognised as the World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD). This day is celebrated annually, and it gives the opportunity for people to raise awareness about elder abuse and to promote its prevention. Elder abuse is a silent epidemic that needs urgent attention to help protect the dignity, rights and well-being of the old people.

The Causes and Contributing Factors to Family and Domestic Violence in the Niger Delta Region

From 2009 to 2023, family and domestic violence has become a critical issue in the

Niger Delta region, stemming from a combination of factors such as economic, socio-cultural and political factors among others. Some of these factors are stated below.

Cultural factors and traditional beliefs: Family and domestic violence is seen by some people as a personal and private issue and is usually trivialised because of cultural beliefs that gives the right to family heads to discipline members of their family. Culturally, the victims are encouraged not to report any form of abuse because family and domestic violence is considered a private and family matter, because it comes with stigma if reported to the appropriate authorities. The stigma causes shame especially to the women and the family and it can lead to the man ostracising the woman. The women are mostly blamed for not being disciplined and submissive to their husbands once there is an incident of family and domestic violence. The society sees family violence as a private affair and women are groomed to conceal their husbands' excesses as a way of respect and to keep the secrets of the family. Some families justify family and domestic violence against women on disobedience, negligence and poor cooking skills among others in the society.

Male gender dominance in the family, in the

Niger Delta region: The men are traditionally seen as the head of the family, while the women are to be submissive to their husband and this automatically gives the men the right to discipline their wives and the children. The boys are also more valued to the extent that if a housewife does not bear a male child, she runs the risk of her husband bringing into the family a second wife that is expected to bear him a male child. The girl child before now was at risk of not being sent to school unlike the boy child. The men dominate and oppress their family members either by restrictions or exertion of excessive control which can lead to physical and emotional abuse. It is often believed that a man owns everything in the family and all authority is given to him and any misunderstanding in the family can be used as a major tool to chastise and make the family better.

Bride price or dowry: This is a traditional obligation of men to reinforce the idea that they are married to their wife's, and they own them and the children. The obligation has automatically given the man the right to control and discipline members of his household. Traditionally, the boy child is trained to be independent while the girl child is

trained to be passive and emotional, and over the years this has made the boys to be domineering, and this can lead to abuse of the girls. Children who are used to violence or when their mothers are victims, can also emulate violence as a way of life (Martin et al. 2023).

Economy and Poverty: Poverty in the Niger Delta region is common because of ecological degradation and oil exploration issues. Farming which was a major occupation of the people of the Niger Delta has remained a shadow of itself, making the people unproductive. Economic constraints, unemployment, militancy, criminality and lack of financial backing for small scale businesses have all fuelled the frustration and caused aggression resulting in family and domestic violence in some of the families. Brini et al. (2025) stated that socioeconomic status of parent can influence the behaviour of their children at adulthood. And one of such behaviour can be abusive behaviour at home. Some women because of the economic depression, low income, and limited access to resources are prone to increased violence in families (Odeigah 2017: 191-212). Most traditional families depend on the men, making the family burden heavy on the men, this factor

also has further increased the stress and likelihood of family and domestic violence.

Lack of basic education: Another major factor fuelling family and domestic violence is the low level of education; most partners in marriage are not aware of the consequences of family and domestic violence (Imhond et al. 2009: 2-5). Education can foster respect for the people's rights and is also a powerful tool for personal and family growth. Lack of good shelter, counselling and mentoring of exposed victims of violence continues to be the norm in the region. But good education helps to shape families and equip the family with knowledge and understanding on how to manage their families. Most people who grew up in abusive homes are more likely to perpetuate family violence in their own homes (Ojieh 2007: 29-31).

Psychological challenge: Psychological challenges can also contribute to family violence, anger and aggression. Some partners take alcohol and some other illicit substances which can increase the prevalence of family and domestic violence. Historically, men who take excessive alcohol are prone to family violence in their homes. Alcohol often has a strong influence on families, resulting to family violence, and this is because it is

associated with aggressive behaviour which is more likely to occur and can result to physical, verbal and emotional abuse (Okoli 2014). Some men use alcohol to calm their nerves, but it can perpetuate cycles of violence and serious abuse in home. It can also drain family finances, worsening and limiting income which further adds to the stress resulting in more conflicts and violence in the family.

The Consequences of Family and Domestic Violence

Family and domestic violence is an issue that has affected many families globally and has caused devastating effects to so many families. The consequences of family violence cannot be over emphasized and includes, anxiety, physical injuries, health challenges, depression, sleep disorder, substance abuse and reproductive disorders among others. Some women experience domestic violence during Pregnancy in both rural and urban areas, this has led to the women losing such pregnancies and sometimes it results in death (Tella et al. 2020). The consequences can be immediate or long term with negative effects on the victims. Some of the consequences of family and domestic violence are stated below.

Anxiety: Family and domestic violence results in worrisome tendencies because it

encompasses sexual, psychological, emotional, financial abuse, depression and oppression. This is not only attached to stress but is a very chronic situation that makes victims constantly live in anticipation of danger. Some couples with anxiety can be traced to family issues with their spouses because of helplessness and the fear of the unknown. The tension and problems resulting from family and domestic violence have led some family members to attempt suicide and some succeeded (Straus 2018).

Physical injuries and health challenges:

Family and domestic violence comes with physical injuries and other health challenges. In the process of violence, victims develop physical injuries from cuts on the body, bruises, broken bones or, trauma to the head or even injury to the brain and a non-fatal or even fatal strangulation. The health challenges could come in the form of long-lasting pain, headaches, respiratory conditions and high blood pressure (Oghiagbephan 2019: 277-278). Family and domestic violence can affect the reproductive system with pregnancy complications such as miscarriages, sexually transmitted diseases and even unwanted pregnancies. Some of the women with HIV

infection had at a time or the other suffered sexual abuse within or outside the family.

Death: This is another crucial issue in family and domestic violence, that has led to several deaths of loved ones because of violence in the home, and some of these deaths have remained unreported to the authorities and few cases have been reported for proper investigations, this has created traumatic experiences and fear in hearts of the families. After the death of a spouse, hopelessness usually sets in because of the interference with subsequent relationships which can lead to distrust for intimacy. In young people or children that are affected, their emotions can also lead to the children being aggressive and having withdrawal symptoms with difficulty in relating to others within the family and outside the family. Common mental disorders among intimate partners during violence can occur, leaving the partners with a disorder (Parcesepe et al. 2021).

Support services and Prevention strategies

Family and domestic violence remains a major challenge in the Niger Delta region which has affected families across not only the Niger Delta region but the entire country. This issue cuts across ethnic, religious, and socio-economic differences and encompasses physical, sexual, emotional and even economic

abuse within the families. This issue that has become a mirage, requires a holistic approach in addressing the problems. It requires a combination of efforts and a comprehensive support for victims as well as preventive strategies to reduce violence in the Niger Delta region.

To really give support services to victims of family and domestic violence, provision of shelter for the safety of victims should be prioritized. The government agencies and non-governmental agencies can help the victims with provision of food, shelter, medical care and their daily needs. Medical and emergency services, healthcare facilities can be made available especially where victims with physical injuries can be treated immediately. Helplines should be open where victims or relations of victims can call for immediate help (Ashimi, Amole, 2011). Counselling centres should be created to give adequate counselling to victims as well as confidential and appropriate support. This is because family violence inflicts deep anxiety, emotional and physical scars on the victims and apart from the scars, they suffer from low self-esteem, trauma and depression. Because of these factors, counselling plays a crucial and vital role in assisting the victims to rebuild their lives and

regain self-esteem, especially in the Niger Delta region where culture, societal norms and religion plays a silent role about the issue.

Another major support that victims of family and domestic violence need, is legal assistance. Non-governmental organisations and legal aids organisations should readily give assistance to victims in obtaining justice and in the understanding of their rights. The Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act 2015 is one of the major legal frameworks giving protection to the victims.

Preventive strategies on family and domestic violence and recommendations

It is important for preventive strategies to be put in place to facilitate the prevention of family and domestic violence. The government and all other stakeholders put in place clear laws guiding the victims. The people of the Niger Delta region have organised educational programmes integrating gender-based violence into the primary and secondary schools' curricula to promote peace and healthy relationships in families and the society at large. There should be collaboration and coordination between the non-governmental agencies and the government at all tiers to enforce laws to the benefit of the society. For effective awareness creation, there should be

mobilisation of religious leaders, community leaders, and the youths to abhor family and domestic violence in the region. Community support services will assist in the reduction of the violence (“Niger Delta Weekly”, 2024).

Government should encourage massive economic empowerment and eradication of poverty, and this will play a vital role in reducing violence in the society. Economic empowerment can go a long way in solving the problem of family and domestic violence. Training on skill acquisition and empowerment will reduce dependency and the problem of abusive partners. Training should also be given to women and men to assert their rights as well as respecting other peoples’ rights. Awareness campaigns are also necessary because raising awareness about violence in the family is very essential and goes a long way in reducing the challenges of family and domestic violence. Avenues such as media campaigns, social media platforms, community outreaches, appropriate preventive programmes in schools, churches and mosques should be created to assist in changing the cultural norms that tolerate abuse and violence. Government should also establish and fund counselling centres in mosques, churches and communities to reduce stigma and improve

access of such services to the people. Counsellors are required and should be employed and trained because counselling is a vital lifeline to family and domestic violence in the Niger Delta Region. Counselling is an instrument that can be used in the healing process of the victims, it also empowers the victims to reclaim their lives. Regular seminars and workshops should be organised and outreach programmes to enable professional counsellors deliver lectures to the public. Young adults should be encouraged to attend such seminars for proper education on family and domestic violence before marriage (Aihie 2024).

Conclusion

The problem of family and domestic violence remains a pervasive challenge across the Niger Delta region of Nigeria and the global world. It has its origin in cultural norms, political, social, economic and financial challenges as well as gender inequality. A weak and corrupt legal system compounded by financial constraints in the average family are also sources of family and domestic violence in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Despite the government policies and increasing awareness created by the Non-Governmental

Organisations, victims continue to suffer in silence because of the stigma, ignorance, inadequate support services and fear. The civil society organisations, international donor agencies and government agencies should unite in combating family and domestic violence in the region. The problem of family and domestic violence is also pronounced by the poverty level and limited resources. In combating this challenge, a combination of measures has to be put in place such as promoting gender equality, appropriate legal framework to strengthen families, empowering communities, encouraging basic education are necessary, at the local and sub-national levels in reducing family and domestic violence in the region. It also requires sustained political will, enacting appropriate laws guiding violence, massive campaigns, mobilisation of the people and law enforcement. Also very important are socio-economic reforms to address the root causes of violence. It is pertinent to note that civil society, government, traditional rulers and international partners must make collaborative effort in creating a safer and more inclusive environment where people can tolerate themselves in the society. Family and domestic violence is a profound societal challenge with devastating

consequences that have eaten deep into the lives of the victims, family members, the communities and the Niger Delta region.

Limitation and future studies

While this study provides valuable insights into the family and domestic violence in the Niger Delta region, a few limitations must be acknowledged. First, the reliance on oral histories, while oral interviews provide firsthand perspectives, memory recall and generation transmission may introduce inconsistencies or gap in historical interpretation. Second, lack of quantitative data, although historical narrative is thoroughly analysed, limited statistical data on the subject matter was not really visible as a result of restricted information by the families or victims. Future research can expand on this study, such as a quantitative approaches, which incorporating economic models or statistical analysis to quantify the effects of family and domestic violence. Also, a comparative analysis, which examining family and domestic violence to the present-day economic meltdown and global trend. These areas of future research would enrich scholarly discussion on family and domestic violence in other part of Nigeria.

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